

we were born catholic and american.
i still thank him for the latter, and
should very possibly be thanking him
for the former also.

we had a little art (much to my
humiliation) and a lot of music
(which i lived for). i received early
and constant encouragement for my
writing (granted, they had no way of
knowing how i would turn out, except
for the notoriety writers have so
regularly earned themselves).

all but one nun liked me, i think,
and i liked a lot of things about
her: her strapping youth, her directness,
her reputation as a reckless driver of
the convent station wagon. i would have
liked her to like me, and i still don't know
what she didn't like about me, perhaps
my blooming acne. maybe she could tell
i undressed her in my thoughts. i fell
romantically in love with each year's
nun, and one of my college girlfriends
even became a nun, and i still harbor
fetishistic fantasies, although the
religious orders have sacrificed so much of
their allure to secularity in attire and
demeanor; the mystery is gone. i miss
the gregorian chant they taught us also.

so i have no great complaints about the
nuns or my elementary school education.
as our current schools get worse, i
appreciate mine more. i marvel at the
pedagogical versatility of the nuns and
their dedication to their tasks. i do
not question their motivations for the
life they chose — what does it matter?
let us heal ourselves. their callings
worked for them. and for me.

DAVID HOCKNEY: PORTRAIT OF ANDY WARHOL, PARIS, 1974

i've never wanted to meet david hockney.
i never wanted to meet andy warhol.

i have met a few famous people,
but there are only very few
that i ever wanted to meet.

would it be arrogant and prideful
of me to admit
that i always felt it was healthier
to aspire to do such good work onself
that one day the famous might want
to meet you?

that's how it happened for bukowski,
who is one of the famous i did meet,
and that i am glad to have met,
and who did not,
to the best of my knowledge,
ever aspire to meet andy warhol
or anybody else.

DAVID HOCKNEY: MY BEDROOM

how neat, how english.
how purified of passion.
i realize that it deliberately states:
i am not van gogh.

how true.

AT LEAST IT GRANTS US A CULTURE

i read in the catalogue,
"more than any other artist,
hockney is identified with the
culture of southern california."

jesus: hockney on the one hand
and bukowski on the other.
what an image the outside world
must have of us. it's no wonder
no one ever comes here
legally anymore.

DAVID HOCKNEY: DE LONGPRE AVENUE, 1976

five years earlier i met bukowski
in his bungalow on de longpre,
between normandie and western.

hockney's segment,
of palms, pastels, clear skies,
neat dwellings,
must have been
considerably west of there.